

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2384

As Reported By House Committee On:
Corrections

Title: An act relating to disposition of juvenile offenders.

Brief Description: Creating a juvenile offender basic training camp program.

Sponsors: Representatives Lemmon, Ogden, Morris, Roland, Grant, Hansen, Orr, Quall, Long, Campbell, Finkbeiner, Eide, Karahalios, Linville, Kessler, Johanson, J. Kohl, Patterson, G. Fisher, Foreman, Heavey, Scott, R. Meyers, Brough, Talcott, Van Luven, Sheahan, Fuhrman, Brumsickle, B. Thomas, Cooke, Schmidt, Wood, Forner, Silver, Lisk, Cothorn, Basich, Kremen, Dyer, Dunshee, Backlund, Chandler, Wolfe, Chappell, Conway, Holm, Mastin, Jones, Sheldon, Tate, Mielke, Rayburn, L. Johnson, Springer and McMorris.

Brief History:

Reported by House Committee on:
Corrections, February 3, 1994, DPS.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Morris, Chair; Mastin, Vice Chair; Long, Ranking Minority Member; Edmondson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; L. Johnson; Moak and Padden.

Minority Report: Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative G. Cole.

Staff: Antonio Sanchez (786-7383).

Background: The Department of Juvenile Rehabilitation is responsible for providing a continuum of preventative, rehabilitation, residential, and supervisory programs and services that hold juvenile offenders accountable for their behavior, protect the public, and eliminate repetitive criminal behavior. Programs are designed to provide specific treatment interventions designed to reduce illegal behavior, avoid idleness, promote the work ethic, and enhance self improvement opportunities.

The Department of Juvenile Rehabilitation does not currently administer a basic training program. The department does however, administer two active forest camp programs; one in Naselle Youth Camp and the other at Mission Creek Youth Camp. These programs are conducted in conjunction with the Department of Natural Resources. Offenders participating in these programs are required to perform hard physical work in the forest such as thinning and planting trees and fire suppression in addition to attending basic education classes.

Most, but not all, correctional basic trainings are styled after the military model for basic training. A basic training camp contains two major characteristics:

1. A basic training atmosphere, with strict rules and discipline; and
2. Participation in work programs, skill development training, drills, and physical training by the offenders.

The rationale for establishing juvenile basic training camps is as follows:

1. Many juvenile offenders will respond to a short but intensive period of confinement followed by a longer period of intensive community supervision;
2. These juvenile offenders will benefit from a strict, structured, and regimented atmosphere that instills a sense of self-discipline and physical conditioning that was lacking in their lives; and
3. These same juvenile youths need exposure to relevant educational and vocational training, drug treatment, and general life skills counseling services to develop more positive and law abiding values and become better equipped to secure legitimate future employment.

Currently, King County is the only government entity in the state that has approved a juvenile basic training program. This program has not been started because of siting difficulties.

Juvenile basic training camp programs have been started with federal support in Alabama, Colorado, and Ohio. Other states, including California, have funded their own programs.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The Department of Social and Health Services is required to establish and operate a juvenile offender basic training camp. Available state, military, or federal facilities or land must be considered when the camp is sited by the department. The operation of the basic training camp can be by a private contractor or federal, state, or local government, including the National Guard. The camp must accommodate at least 70 beds.

JUVENILE OFFENDER BASIC TRAINING CAMP MODEL:

The basic training camp program must be a structured and regimented model, emphasizing the building up of an offender's self-esteem, confidence, and discipline through a curriculum training and work schedule that incorporates prevocational education, rehabilitation, and training for no less than 16 hours a day, six days a week.

Program components include: basic education, prevocational, training, work-based learning, live work, work ethic skills, conflict resolution counseling, and structured intensive physical training.

LENGTH OF THE PROGRAM:

Juvenile offender participants in this program spend the first 120 days of this sentence in basic training camp. After successful completion of the camp, offenders are required to spend the remainder of their sentences in an intensive after care parole program. If individuals are removed from the program because of discipline problems, they are required to spend the remainder of their sentences in a juvenile institution.

ELIGIBILITY:

Only juvenile offenders committed to a sentence of between 52 and 78 weeks are eligible to be sentenced to the basic training camp. Violent offenders and sex offenders are prohibited from the program.

Offenders with physical or mental health difficulties are screened to determine if participation in the program would jeopardize their performance or health.

POST PROGRAM FOLLOW-UP:

The department is required to develop a comprehensive post program follow-up component for all participants who successfully complete the basic training camp. The follow-up component assists the offenders in successfully reintegrating into the community.

PROGRAM DATA AND REPORTS DUE:

The Department of Social and Health Services is required to develop and maintain data on the recidivism rates of

participants of the juvenile offender basic training camp program for a period of two years after they have completed the program. The department is also required to maintain information on the criminal activity, educational progress, and employment activities of all program participants.

An outcome evaluation report on the progress of the juvenile offender basic training program must be completed by the Department of Social and Health Services by December 12, 1996.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: All references to juvenile offender basic training are removed and replaced with juvenile offender basic training camp. The operation of the facility can be contracted to a private contractor, the National Guard, or conducted by a federal, state, or local agency. The facility must begin operation by January 1, 1995. Contracts for the operation of the camp may not be on a per diem basis. The camp is required to accommodate at least 70 new beds. These beds are to be considered new beds, not replacement beds. Only offenders committed to a sentence of between 52 to 78 weeks are eligible to be sentenced to the juvenile offender training camp option. Violent offenders and sex offenders are prohibited from being sentenced to the program. Judges are not given the ability to sentence juvenile offenders to the basic training camp under a "manifest injustice" sentence. All offenders are sentenced to the juvenile offender basic training camp for a period of 120 days; however, upon successful completion of the program, offenders are required to spend the remainder of their sentence in an intensive after care program under parole.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This program will give juvenile offenders valuable discipline, skills, and structure. It will be a significant step in giving our juvenile officials a positive tool in developing solutions to the rising juvenile crime problem. After care is an important component of the basic training model and this program could develop a strong program.

Testimony Against: No data is available indicating that these types of basic training programs could be effective in rehabilitating young juvenile offenders. The focus of operation of this type of program should be in the local communities.

Witnesses: John Powers, Pioneer Human Services (pro); Lois Smith, Juvenile Court Administrators (pro); Virginia Penn, Mothers Against Gangs (pro); Sid Sidorowicz, Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation (con); and Marty Butkovich, Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Juvenile Rehabilitation (con).